

Spate of Bear Attacks Trouble Russia's Far East

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Desperate for food, the bears wander into nearby settlements of far-eastern Russia.

A spate of bear attacks, including the mauling of a teenage boy, have occurred in far-eastern Russia in recent weeks, in what scientists say may be the result of changes to the animals' habitat.

Salmon, a staple of the bears' diet, have not been able to reach spawning rivers due to a congestion of nets and other obstacles, the Interfax news agency reported, citing wildlife experts. Desperate for food, the bears wander into nearby settlements.

On Sunday, a 14-year-old boy heading home from his grandmother's house was mauled within an inch of his life by a bear that had roamed into their town in the Kuril Islands.

Bystanders immediately called police, who rushed to the scene and fatally shot the animal, but only after it had inflicted numerous gash wounds while clawing at the boy and dragging him some 200 meters.

The boy remains in intensive care after undergoing extensive surgery, the report said, citing the chief doctor at the hospital.

A woman in the Sakha republic narrowly escaped an attack around 2 a.m. Wednesday morning by screaming until the bear fled. The animal had beaten down a door to the woman's cabin and bit her hand before her screams scared it away.

A man in the same region earlier this month was mauled and bitten in the head before the attacking bear was spooked — that time by the man's mobile phone. During the attack, the phone somehow turned on and the startup tone startled the animal, which clawed at the device and then ran off.

See also:

[Three Bears Shot in Eastern Russia Following Wave of Attacks](#)

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